

ANTIENT and MODERN

ITALY

COMPARED:

Being the FIRST PART of

LIBERTY,

A

POEM.

---

By Mr. THOMSON.

---



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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
**FREDERICK,**  
PRINCE of WALES.

*S I R,*



WHEN I reflect upon that ready Condescension, that preventing Generosity, with which YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS received the following Poem under your Protection; I can alone ascribe it to the Recommendation, and Influence of the Subject. In you the Cause and Concerns of Liberty have so

B

zealous

zealous a Patron, as entitles whatever may have the least Tendency to promote them, to the Distinction of your Favour. And who can entertain this delightful Reflection, without feeling a Pleasure far superior to that of the fondest Author; and of which all true Lovers of their Country must participate? To behold the noblest Dispositions of the Prince, and of the Patriot, united: an overflowing Benevolence, Generosity, and Candour of Heart, joined to an enlightened Zeal for Liberty, an intimate Persuasion that on it depends the Happiness and Glory both of Kings and People: to see these shining out in Public Virtues, as they have hitherto smiled in all the Social Lights and Private Accomplishments of Life, is a Prospect that cannot but inspire a general Sentiment of Satisfaction and Gladness, more easy to be felt than expressed.

If the following Attempt to trace Liberty, from the first Ages down to her excellent Establishment in GREAT BRITAIN, can at all merit your Ap-  
pro-

probation, and prove an Entertainment to **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS**; if it can in any Degree answer the Dignity of the Subject, and of the Name under which I presume to shelter it; I have my best Reward: particularly, as it affords me an Opportunity of declaring that **I** am, with the greatest Zeal and Respect,

*S I R,*

**YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S**

Most Obedient

And most Devoted Servant,

*James Thomson.*





# LIBERTY.

## PART I.



My lamented TALBOT! while with Thee

The *Muse* gay-rov'd the glad *Hesperian* Round,

And drew th' inspiring Breath of Ancient Arts ;

Ah ! little thought she her returning Verse

Should sing our Darling Subject to thy *Shade*.

5

And does the Mystic Veil, from mortal Beam,

C

In-

Involve those Eyes where every Virtue smil'd,

And all the FATHER's candid Spirit shone ?

The Light of Reason, pure, without a Cloud ;

Full of the generous Heart, the mild Regard ;

10

Unblemish'd Honour, uncorrupted Faith ;

And limpid Truth, that looks the very Soul.

But to the Death of mighty Nations turn'd

My Strain, be there absorb'd the Private Tear.

MUSING, I lay ; warm from the sacred Walks,

15

Where at each step Imagination burns :

Ten thousand Wonders rowling in my thought,

As the Great Scene of deathless deeds I tread,

Tread the blest Ground by more than mortals trod,

And see those Skies that breath'd the *Roman* Soul.

20

Mean



Mean time wide-scatter'd round, awful, and hoar,  
Lies a vast Monument once glorious *Rome*,  
The Tomb of Empire ! Ruins ! that efface  
Whate'er, of finish'd, modern Pomp can boast.

Of these Ideas full, reposing Sense 25  
In slumber funk ; and Fancy's Magic hand  
Led me anew o'er all the solemn Scene,  
Still in the Mind's pure eye more solemn drest.  
When strait, methought, the fair majestic POWER  
Of LIBERTY appear'd. Not, as of old, 30  
Extended in her hand the Cap, and Rod,  
Whose Slave-inlarging touch gave double life :  
But her bright Temples bound with *British* Oak,  
And Naval Honours nodded on her Brow.  
Sublime her Port. Loose o'er her Shoulder flow'd 35

Her

Her sea-green Robe, with Constellations gay.

An Island Goddess now; and her high care

The Queen of Isles, the Mistress of the Main.

My heart beat filial transport at the sight;

And, as she mov'd to speak, th' awaken'd *Muse* 40

Listen'd intense. A while she look'd around,

With mournful eye the well-known Ruins mark'd,

And then, her Sighs repressing, thus began.

Mine are these Wonders, all thou see'st is mine;

But ah how chang'd! the falling poor Remains 45

Of what exalted once th' *Ausonian* Shore.

Look back thro' time; and from the gloom disclos'd,

Painting my words, behold the scatter'd Scene.

The Great Republick see! that glow'd sublime

With the mixt Freedom of a thousand States; 50

Rais'd

Rais'd on the Thrones of Kings her Curule Chair,

And by her Fasces aw'd the subject World.

See busy Millions swarming all the Land,

With Cities throng'd, and teeming Culture high :

For on her free-born Sons then Nature smil'd, 55

And pour'd the Plenty that belongs to Men.

Behold, the Country chearing, Villas rise,

In lively Prospect ; by the secret lapse

Of Brooks now lost, and Streams renown'd in Song :

In *Umbria's* closing Vales, or on the brow 60

Of her brown Hills that breathe the scented gale :

On *Baia's* viny coast ; where peaceful Seas,

Fan'd by kind Zephirs, ever kiss the shore ;

And Suns unclouded shine, and purest Air :

Or in the spacious Neighbourhood of *Rome* ; 65

D

Far-

Far-shining upwards to the *Sabine* Hills;  
To *Anio's* Roar, and *Tibur's* Olive Shade;  
To where *Preneſte* lifts her airy Brow;  
Or downwards ſpreading to the ſunny ſhore,  
Wav'd from the main, where *Alba* draws the Breeze. 70  
See diſtant Mountains leave their Vallies dry,  
And o'er the proud Arcade their Tribute pour,  
To lave Imperial *Rome*. For ages laid  
Deep, maſſy, firm, diverging every way,  
From ſea to ſea, her Public Roads behold: 75  
By various Nations trod, and ſuppliant Kings;  
With Legions flaming, or with Triumph green.  
Full in the Centre of theſe wondrous Works,  
While Tombs of Heroes confecrate the way,  
The Pride of Earth! *Rome* in her Glory ſee! 80

Behold

Behold her Demigods, in Senate met ;  
All Head to counsel, and all Heart to act :  
The Commonweal inspiring every Tongue  
With fervent Eloquence, *unbrib'd*, and *bold* ;  
Ere low *Corruption* taught the *Servile Herd* 85  
To know a *Master's* voice. Astonish'd, mark  
Her Forum, earnest, popular, and loud,  
In trembling wonder hush'd, when the two\* *SIREs*,  
As they the *Private Father* greatly quell'd,  
Stood up the *Public Fathers* of the State. 90  
See Justice judging there in Human Shape.  
Hark how with Freedom's voice it thunders high,  
Or in soft murmurs sinks to TULLY's tongue.  
Her Tribes, her Census see ; her Generous Troops,  
Whose Pay was Glory, and whose best Reward 95

Free

\* L. J. Brutus, and Virginius.

Free for their Country and for Me to die;  
 Ere Mercenary Murder grew a Trade,  
 Mark, as the purple Triumph waves along,  
 The highest Pomp and lowest Fall of Life.  
 Her Festive Games, the School of Heroes; see,  
 Her Circus, ardent with contending Youth;  
 Her Streets, her Temples, Palaces, and Baths,  
 Full of fair Forms of Beauty's eldest born,  
 And of a Race by Plastic Virtue mark'd,  
 While Sculpture lives around, and *African Hills*  
 Lend their best Stores to heave the pillar'd Dome;  
 All that to *Roman* Grandeur the soft Touch  
 Of *Grecian* Art can join. But Language fails  
 To paint this Sun, this Center of Mankind;  
 Where every Virtue, Glory, Treasure, Art,

At-

Attracted strong, in heighten'd lustre met.

Need I the Contrast mark? unjoyous View!

A Land in all, in Government, and Arts,

In Virtue, Genius, Heaven and Earth revers'd.

Who but these far-fam'd Ruins to behold, 115

Proofs of a People, whose heroic Aims

Soar'd far above the little selfish sphere

Of doubting modern Life; who but inflam'd

With Classic Zeal, the consecrated Scenes

Of Men and Deeds to trace, the Wonder, Theme, 120

And Model of Mankind; unhappy Land!

Would trust thy Wilds, and Cities loose of sway?

Are these the Vales, that once exulting States

In their warm bosom fed? The Mountains these,

On whose high-blooming fides my Sons of old 125

I bred to Glory? These dejected Towns,  
 Sordid, and mean, where Life can scarce subsist,  
 The Scenes of Antient Opulence, and Pomp?

Come! by whatever *Sacred Name* disguis'd,  
 OPPRESSION, come! and in thy works rejoice! 130  
 See Nature's richest Plains to putrid Fens  
 Turn'd by thy Rage. From their uncheerful bounds  
 See raz'd th' enliv'ning Village, Farm, and Seat.  
 First Rural Toil, by thy rapacious hand  
 Robb'd of his poor Reward, resign'd the Plow; 135  
 And now he dares not turn the noxious Glebe.  
 'Tis thine intire. The lonely Swain himself,  
 Who loves at large along the grassy Downs  
 His flocks to pasture, Thine abhorrent flies.  
 Far as the sickening Eye can sweep around, 140  
 'Tis



'Tis all one Defart, desolate, and grey,

Graz'd by the fullen Bufalo alone;

And where the rank unventilated Growth

Of rotting Ages taints the passing Gale.

Beneath the baleful Blast the City pines,

145

Or finks infeebl'd, or infected burns.

Beneath it mourns the solitary Road,

Roll'd in rude Mazes o'er th' abandon'd Waste;

While Antient Ways, ingulph'd, are feen no more.

Such thy dire Plains, thou *Self-Destroyer*! Foe

150

To Human-kind! Thy Mountains too, profufe

Where favage Nature blooms, feem their fad plaint

To raife againft thy defolating Rod.

There on the breezy Brow, where thriving States,

And famous Cities once, to the pleas'd Sun,

155

Far

Far other Scenes of rising Culture spread,  
 Pale shine thy ragged Towns. Neglected round,  
 Each Harvest pines ; the livid, lean Produce  
 Of heartless Labour : while thy hated Joys,  
 Not proper Pleasure, lift the lazy hand. 160  
 Better to sink in Sloth the Woes of life,  
 Than wake their rage with unavailing Toil.  
 Hence drooping Art almost to Nature leaves  
 The rude, unguided Year. Thin wave the Gifts  
 Of yellow *Ceres*, thin the radiant Blush 165  
 Of Orchard reddens in the warmest ray.  
 To weedy wildness run, no Rural Wealth,  
 (Such as Dictators fed) the Garden pours.  
 Crude the wild Olive flows, and foul the Vine ;  
 Nor Juice *Cæcubian*, nor *Falernian*, more 170

Streams

Streams Life, and Joy, fave in the *Muse's* bowl.

Unfenced by Art, the spinning Race

Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.

In vain, forlorn in wilds, the Citron blows ;

And flowering Plants perfume the desert gale.

175

Thro' the vile hedge the tender Myrtle twines.

Inglorious droops the Laurel, dead to Song,

And long a stranger to the Heroe's brow.

Nor half thy Triumph this: cast from brute Fields

Into the Haunts of Men thy ruthless eye.

180

There buxom Plenty never turns her horn ;

The Grace and Virtue of exterior Life,

No clean Convenience reigns ; even Sleep itself,

Least delicate of Powers, reluctant there

Lays on the Bed impure his heavy head.

185

F

Thy

Thy horrid Walk ! dead, empty, unadorn'd,  
 See Streets whose Echos never know the voice  
 Of chearful Hurry, Commerce many-tongue'd,  
 And Art mechanic at his various task  
 Fervent employ'd. Mark the desponding Race, 190  
 Of Occupation void, as void of Hope;  
 Hope the glad Ray, glanc'd from ETERNAL GOOD,  
 That Life enlivens, and exalts it's Powers,  
 With views of Fortune — Madness all to them !  
 By Thee relentless seiz'd their better Joys, 195  
 To the soft aid of cordial Airs they fly,  
 A kind Oblivion breathing o'er their Woes,  
 And Love and Music melt their Souls away.  
 From feeble *Justice* see how rash *Revenge*,  
 Trembling, the Ballance snatches ; and her Sword, 200

Fearful himself, to venal Ruffians gives.

See where God's Altar nursing Murder stands,

With the red touch of dark Assassins stain'd.

But chief let *Rome*, the mighty City! speak

The full-exerted Genius of thy Reign.

205

Behold Her rise amid the lifeless Waste,

Expiring Nature all corrupted round ;

While the lone *Tyber*, thro' the desert Shore,

Winds his waste stores, and fullen sweeps along.

Patch'd from my Fragments, in unsolid Pomp,

210

Mark how the Temple glares; and, artful drest,

Amusive draws the superstitious Train.

Mark how the Palace lifts a lying front,

Concealing often, in magnific Jail,

Proud Want, a deep unanimated Gloom!

215

And

And often joining to the drear abode  
Of Misery, whose melancholy walks  
Seem its voracious Grandeur to reproach.  
Within the City Bounds, the Desert see.  
See the rank Vine o'er subterranean roofs, 220  
Indecent, spread; beneath whose fretted gold.  
It once exulting flow'd. The People mark,  
Matchless, while fir'd by me; to Public Good  
Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,  
Afraid of nothing but unworthy Life, 225  
Elate with Glory, an Heroic Soul  
Known to the Vulgar Breaſt: behold them now  
A thin despairing Number, all ſubdu'd,  
The Slaves of Slaves, by Superſtition fool'd,  
By Vice unman'd and a licentious Rule, 230  
In

In Guile ingenious, and in Murder brave.

Such in one Land, beneath the same fair Clime,

Thy Sons, OPPRESSION, are ; and such were MINE.

Even with thy labour'd *State*, for whose vain show

Deluded Thousands starve ; all age-begrim'd, 235

Torn robb'd and scatter'd in unnumber'd Sacks,

And by the Tempest of two thousand Years

Continual shaken, let my *Ruins* vie.

These Roads that yet the *Roman* hand assert,

Beyond the weak repair of modern Toil ; 240

These fractur'd Arches, that the chiding Stream

No more delighted hear ; these rich Remains

Of Marbles now unknown, where shines imbib'd

Each parent ray ; these massy Columns, hew'd

From *Africk's* farthest shore ; one Granite all, 245

G

These

These Obelisks high-towering to the Sky,  
 Mysterious mark'd with dark *Egyptian* Lore;  
 These endless Wonders that this \* *Sacred Way*  
 Illumine still, and consecrate to Fame;  
 These Fountains, Vases, Urns, and Statues, charg'd  
 With the fine stores of Art-compleating *Greece*.  
 From these too drawn, mine is thy every Beast;  
 Thy † BUONAROTIS, thy PALLADIOS mine;  
 And mine the fair Designs, that RAPHAEL'S soul  
 O'er the live canvass emanating breath'd.

What would you say, ye Conquerors of Earth!  
 Ye *Romans*! could you raise the laurel'd Head;  
 Could you the Country see, with Seas of blood,  
 And the dread Toil of ages, won so dear;  
 Your Pride, your Triumph, your supreme Delight!

\* *Via Sacra*.

† M. ANGELO BUONAROTI, PALLADIO, and RAPHAEL D'URBINO; the three great modern Masters in Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting.



For whose Defence oft, in the doubtful hour,  
 You rush'd with rapture down the gulph of Fate,  
 Of Death ambitious! till by awful Deeds,  
 Virtues, and Courage, that amaze Mankind,  
 The Queen of Nations rose; possess'd of all 265  
 That Nature, Art, and Glory could bestow:  
 What would you say, deep in the last Abyss  
 Of Slavery, Vice, and unambitious Wast,  
 Thus to behold her sunk? Your crowded Plains,  
 Void of their Cities; unadorn'd your Hills; 270  
 Ungrac'd your Lakes; your Ports to Ships unknown;  
 Your lawless Floods, and your abandon'd Streams;  
 These could you know? these could you love again?  
 Thy *Tibur*, HORACE, could it now inspire  
 Content, Poetic Ease, and Rural Joy, 275

Soon

Soon bursting into Song : while thro' the Groves  
 Of headlong *Anio*, dashing to the Vale,  
 In many a tortur'd Stream, you mus'd along ?  
 \* Yon wild retreat, where Superstition dreams,  
 Could, TULLY, you your *Tusculum* believe? 280  
 And could you deem yon naked Hills, that form,  
 Fam'd in old Song, the Ship-forsaken † Bay,  
 Your *Formian* Shore? Once the Delight of Earth,  
 Where Art and Nature, ever-smiling, join'd  
 On the gay Land to lavish all their Stores; 285  
 How chang'd, how vacant, VIRGIL, wide around,  
 Would now your *Naples* seem? Disaster'd less  
 By black *Vesuvius* thundering o'er the Coast,  
 His midnight Earthquakes, and his mining Fires,  
 Than

\* *Tusculum* is reckoned to have stood at a Place now called *Grotta Ferrata*, a Convent of Monks.

† The Bay of *Mola* (anciently *Formiæ*) into which HOMER brings ULYSSES, and his Companions. Near *Formiæ* CICERO had a Villa.

Than by Despotic Rage : that inward gnaws, 290

A native Foe ; a foreign, tears without.

First from your flatter'd CÆSARS This begun ;

Till houseless spreads, at last, the \* Syren Plain,

That the dire Soul of HANNIBAL disarm'd ;

And wrapt in Weeds the † Shore of *Venus* lies. 295

There *Baia* sees no more the joyous Throng ;

Her banks all beaming with the Pride of *Rome* :

No generous Vines now bask along the Hills,

Where sport the Breezes of the *Tyrrhene* main :

With Baths and Temples mixt, no Villas rise ; 300

Nor, Art-sustain'd amid reluctant Waves,

Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing Deep :

H

No

\* *Campagna felice*, adjoining to *Capua*.

† The Coast of *Baia* ; which was formerly adorned with the Works mentioned in the following Lines ; and where amidst many magnificent Ruins, those of a Temple erected to *Venus* are still to be seen.

No spreading Ports their sacred Arms extend :  
 No mighty Moles the big intrusive Storm,  
 From the calm Station, roll resounding back. 305  
 An almost total Defolation fits,  
 A dreary Stillness, sad'ning o'er the Coast ;  
 \* Where, when soft Suns and tepid Winters rose,  
 Rejoicing Crowds inha'd the balm of Peace ;  
 Where city'd Hill to Hill reflected blaze ; 310  
 And where, with *Ceres*, *Bacchus* went to hold  
 A genial Strife : Her youthful Form, robust,  
 Even Nature yields ; by Fire, and Earthquake rent :  
 Whole stately Cities in the dark Abrupt  
 Swallow'd at once, or vile in rubbish laid, 315  
 A nest for Serpents ; from the red Abyss

New

\* All along this Coast, the ancient *Romans* had their Winter retreats ; and several populous Cities stood.

New Hills, explosive, thrown; the *Lucrine* Lake  
 A reedy Pool; and all to *Cuma's* Point,  
 The Sea recovering his usurp'd Domain,  
 And pour'd triumphant o'er the bury'd Dome. 220

Hence, BRITAIN, learn; my best-establiſh'd, laſt,  
 And more than GREECE, or ROME, my ſteady Reign;  
 The Land where, *King* and *People* equal bound  
 By guardian Laws, my full'eſt Bleſſings flow;  
 And where my jealous unſubmitting Soul,  
 The dread of Tyrants ! burns in every breaſt : 325

Learn hence, if ſuch the miſerable fate  
 Of an heroic Race, the Maſters once  
 Of Humankind; what, when depriv'd of Me,  
 How grievous muſt be thine ? In ſpite of Climes, 330  
 Whoſe Sun-enliven'd *Æther* wakes the Soul

To

To higher Powers ; in spite of happy Soils,

That, but by Labour's flightest aid impell'd,

With Treasures teem to thy cold Clime unknown ;

If there desponding fail the common Arts,

335

And sustenance of life: could Life itself,

Or, heart-consum'd, a Tyrant's rotten Pomp,

Subsist with thee? Against depressing Skies,

Join'd to full-spread Oppression's cloudy Brow,

How could thy Spirits hold? where Vigour find,

340

Forc'd Fruits to tear from their unnative Soil?

Or every Harvest storing in thy Ports,

Profuse of all, to plow the dreadful Wave?

Here paus'd the GODDESS. By the Pause assur'd,

In trembling accents thus I mov'd my Prayer.

345

" Oh first, and most benevolent of Powers!

" Come

" Come from eternal Splendors, here on Earth,

" Against despotic Pride, and Rage, and Lust,

" To shield Mankind ; to raise them to assert

" The native Rights, and Honour of their Race : 350

" Teach me thy lowest Subject, but in Zeal

" Yielding to none, the PROGRESS OF THY REIGN,

" And with a Strain from THEE enrich the *Muse*.

" For thy proud Slave, alone ; her Patron Thou,

" And great Inspirer be ! then will she joy, 355

" Tho' narrow Life her Lot, and Private Shade :

" And when her *Venal Voice* she barter's vile,

" Or to thy open or thy secret Foes ;

" May ne'er those sacred Raptures touch her more,

" By slavish Hearts unfelt ! and may her Song 360

" Sink in oblivion with the nameless Crew !

“ Vermin of State ! to thy o’erflowing Light

“ That owe their Being, yet betray thy Cause.”

Then, condescending kindly, the HEAVENLY POWER  
Return’d.— “ What here, suggested by the Scene,

“ I flight unfold, record, and sing at home,

“ In that blest Isle, where (so we Spirits move)

“ With one quick effort of my Will I am

“ There Truth, *unlicens’d*, walks; even Kings themselves

“ Invite her forth, the Monarchs of the Free

“ By that best Glory pierc’d, that God-like Joy,

“ That gay Security, that Pride of Rule;

“ When Men, not Slaves, when all-performing Love,

“ Not fluggish Hate, and faithless Fear, obey.

“ Fix’d on my Rock, there an Indulgent Race

“ O’er BRITONS wield the Scepter of the Heart:

“ And,



- " And, mixing Worth with Worth, the ROYAL PAIR  
 " To steady Justice yielding Goodness join.  
 " Nor sets the Prospect in this pleasing view;  
 " While there, to finish what his Sires began, 380  
 " A PRINCE behold ! for ME who burns sincere,  
 " Even with a Subject's Zeal. He my great Work  
 " Will Parent-like sustain; and added give  
 " The Touch, the *Graces* and the *Muses* owe.  
 " For BRITAIN'S Glory swells his panting Breast; 385  
 " And *Antient Arts* He emulous revolves;  
 " His Pride to let the smiling Heart abroad,  
 " Thro' Clouds of Pomp, that but conceal the Man;  
 " To please his Pleasure; Bounty his Delight;  
 " And all the Soul of TIRUS dwells in Him." 390

Hail

Hail glorious Theme! But how alas! shall Verse,  
 From the crude Stores of mortal Language drawn,  
 How faint and tedious, fang, what, piercing deep,  
 The GODDESS flash'd at once upon my Soul.  
 For, clear Precision all, the Tongue of Gods 395  
 Is Harmony itself; to every Ear  
 Familiar known, like Light to every Eye.  
 Mean time disclosing Ages, as She spoke,  
 In dread Succession pour'd their Empires forth;  
 Scene after Scene, the Human Drama spread; 400  
 And still th'embodiy'd Picture rush'd to sight.  
 Oh THOU! to whom the *Muses* owe their flame;  
 Who bid'st beneath the Pole *Parnassus* rise,  
 And *Hippocrenè* flow; with thy bold Ease  
 The striking Force, the Lightning of thy Thought, 405  
 And

And thy strong Phrase, that rowls profound, and clear ;

Oh gracious G O D D E S S ! reinspire my Song :

While I, to nobler than Poetic Fame

Aspiring, thy Commands to B R I T O N S bear.



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